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AUTHOR Merchant, Jerrold J.
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ABSTRACT

In order to have more utility as constructs, international and intercultural communication must be redefined and interrelated. International communication is any symbolic interaction among people of different nation states. This definition rules out all communication which does not pass across national boundaries, but includes all social messages that do. Intercultural communication differs from international communication in its cultural base. That is, it is concerned with that communication among people of different cultures in which the culture is a determining factor in the form or content of the communication. A visual model orders the relationships among four types of communication: international communication, international political communication, intercultural communication, and international cultural communication. Communicologists must take the responsibility for providing a common meeting ground for other disciplines in the study of communication. (TS)

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RELATING INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Jerrold J. Merchant

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Relating International And Intercultural Communication

Intercommunication. International communication. International political communication. Intercultural communication. Transcultural communication. Crosscultural communication. Intracultural communication. Add the terms "social" and "ethnic" to the prefixes "cross", "trans", "intra", and "inter" and one is faced with a confusing and bewildering array of terms that mean something different to almost everyone interested in the study of communication. As a result, communication scholars interested in studying communication among different nations and peoples often talk past each other for lack of a clear frame of reference for the particular type of communication across national boundaries.

An example that demonstrates the confusion that scholars must deal with regarding this group of terms is the definition of the most widely used term among the group--"international communication." As Maletzke observes: "Very often, in the American literature in particular, the phrase international communication is frequently used, and

one can never be sure whether the authors intend to differentiate as between international and intercultural."[1] Maletzke continues: "international communication takes place on the level of countries or nations, which is to say across frontiers. This means: intercultural and international communication can, on occasion, be identical; but this is not always so."[2] Sitaram contends: "International communication implies a political, rather than a cultural, situation. It is communication at national levels."[3] And McClelland argues, "let us define international communication as including both the structure and the content of the stream of social messages transmitted over time and across national boundaries."[4] In other words, "international communication" could be anything from face-to-face international decision-making,[5] to an international concern for the study of communication.

If scholars are going to study this communication, then they should be clear about what they mean when they try to develop theory to explain these processes. It is the position of this paper that in order to have more utility as constructs international and intercultural communication must be redefined and interrelated.

But how widespread is this kind of communication and what kind of need is there to study it? The study of international and intercultural communication is shared by communicologists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, international relations experts, public opinion analysts, historians, and many others. The

philosophical starting point for most of these scholars is the belief that better communication will improve the human condition. As Prosser observes: "Out of confrontation has come communication. Communication remains both the means and sometimes the index of the level of peaceful coexistence among nations and peoples. Failures to communicate effectively are prevalent."[6] Roy Prosterman observes in Surviving to 3,000:

> The time is short. Within the next few years, major support must develop internationally--from universities, foundations, faculty, and students--for the creation of curricula of study and professional training in the conflict studies field. By the 1980's, unless our society and others have many more people in positions of influence who are capable of thinking about these problems systematically and from a perspective that embodies the knowledge of many fields, the prognosis for mankind is grim indeed.[7]

As far as international and intercultural communication are concerned, the main point to remember concerning Prosterman's doomsday prophesy is that there is no alternative to communication; we will communicate in the "global village"; we cannot not communicate. In the United States alone: "There are 60 million homes in the United States and over 95 percent of them are equipped with a television set. (More than 25 percent have two or more sets.) In the average home the television is turned on some five hours forty-five minutes a day. The average male viewer, between his second

and sixty-fifth year, will watch television for over 3000 entire days--roughly nine full years of his life."[8]

To begin this process of redefinition, "international communication" must be redefined and related to other kinds of communication among nations and peoples. Because most communicologists consider "international communication" to be the broadest of the so-called "international group," and thus to promote as little confusion as possible and to stay in the mainstream of the inertia regarding this term, I propose that we adopt a definition which is broad enough in scope to satisfy almost everyone, but limiting enough to be clear: international communication is any symbolic interaction between people of different nation states. This definition rules out all communication which does not pass across national boundaries, but includes all social messages that do.

But surely there is a need for a term which stands for more politically significant international communication. In other words, is the communication between Kissinger and Chou En-lai of the same nature as the communication between two international pen pals? Clearly not. They are fundamentally different in political significance. Fagen argues that in the study of communication in politics one must concentrate on that communication which "is considered political by virtue of the consequences, actual and potential, that it has for the functioning of the political system."[9] In the same

way that important communication in politics needs to be isolated, that international communication which makes a difference in the affairs of one state with another needs to be isolated. I propose that we call that kind of important communication international political communication and that it be defined as: politically significant symbolic interaction between nation states.

It is necessary to note that this "international political communication" is not the same as Davison's in his book International Political Communication.[10] Davison searches for ways in which the United States can use public communication more effectively to advance its foreign policies.[11] Of course, if Davison's public communication is significant in international relations then it would satisfy the definition of international political communication given above; if not, it would be called international communication.

Another major difference between these two definitions of international political communication is that one includes intent and the other does not. As Davison observes: "There is no easy way to label those communications that do in fact have a political effect, whether they are designed to do so or not. Indeed, some messages with no political purpose may influence power relationships appreciably. This is especially likely to be true in the case of important new stories or information about scientific developments. Conversely, some messages that are designed to exert a political influence fall on deaf ears and achieve no effects at all." In other words, is

the intent to have a significant effect on another nation sufficient to label a piece of communication "political?" It is the position of this paper that only that international communication which does have a politically significant effect can be labeled "political"--whether it was intended or not. That is, what is politically "significant" in any given case will require judgment on someone's part. Thus the validity of labeling a piece of international communication "political" will rest with the evaluator's judgment about the relevance and significance of that communication; naturally the validity of that judgment will rest on the strength or weakness of the argument which supports it.

There are two distinct advantages to this definition. First, limiting international political communication to only that communication activity which makes a difference in the affairs of one nation state with another narrows the scope of our inquiry; we establish some priorities with regard to exactly what we are studying. Second, by concentrating on the significance of the communication we are turning problems of definition into empirical problems--problems that we can research rather than argue over.[13]

Intercultural communication differs from international and international political communication in its cultural base. It is concerned with communication between people of different cultures in which the culture is a determining factor in the form and/or content of the communication. In instances where communication crosses national boundaries and culture is not a variable in the message, then it is a

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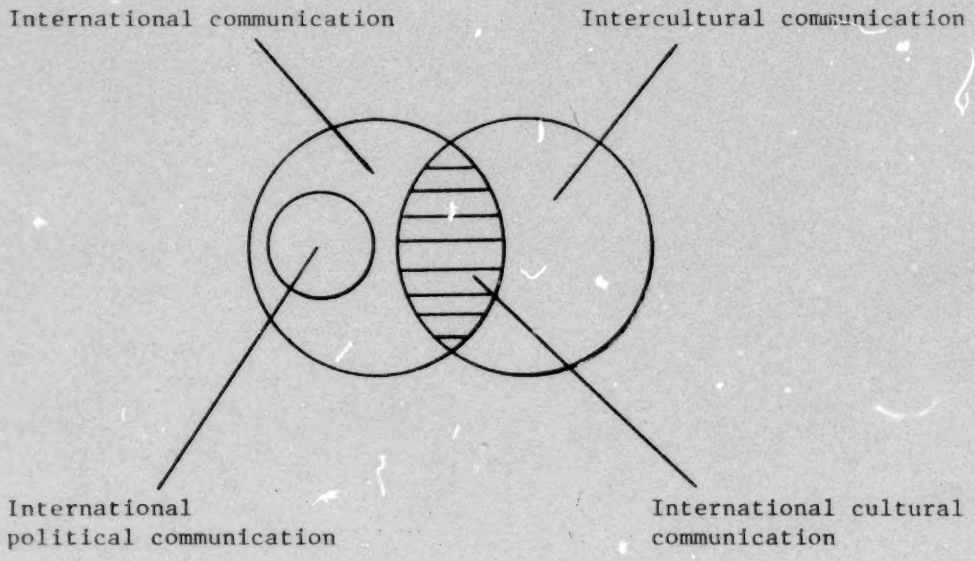
"social message" and becomes international communication. If culture is obviously an influential factor in the nature of the communication, it is a type of intercultural communication.

But what of that communication that does not cross national boundaries? Surely to argue that there is not more than one culture in any given nation state would be untenable. Yet, on the other hand it would be a useful distinction to isolate all intercultural communication between different nations. It is the position of this paper that all intercultural communication between peoples of different cultures in different nations should be called international cultural communication. The parallel with international political communication is obvious. The following visual model orders the relationships among these various types of communication:



The visual image the model presents is slightly deceptive in that the amount of area inside each type does not necessarily represent the comparative percentage or quantity of communication in communication among nations and peoples. The model clearly identifies four main areas of communication among nations and peoples:

1) international communication--any symbolic interaction between people of different nation states.
2) international political communication--politically significant symbolic interaction between nation states.
3) intercultural communication--communication between people of different cultures in which the culture is a determining factor in the form and/or content of the communication.
4) international cultural communication--intercultural communication between people of different cultures in different nation states.

The advantages of this construct over the existing view of these concepts are twofold. First, each different type of communication is clearly distinguished from each other type. The parallel structure of the model clarifies and orders the relationships and interrelationships among the different constructs. Although each type of communication may have potential in each of the other types, the point is that it is more one than any other. The model forces the communicologist to clarify his focus during his investigation and to argue the exclusion of all other tangential forms. Especially in the case of international

political and international cultural communication, an argument is needed to claim inclusion as types of "political" or "cultural" communication, but this argument should be inherent in any worthwhile communication analysis. As a matter of fact, openly stating that the definition will rest or fall with the strength of the argument which supports it may force some communicologists to either rethink or reinforce their analyses. For example, an examination of the communication during the archetypal confrontation in the twentieth century--the Cuban Missile Crisis--will explain the usefulness of this article's model.[14] Because Kennedy and Khrushchev were the two principal decision-makers during this crisis, an assessment of the worth of their respective strategies of persuasion during the conflict demonstrates that some communication was more important than other communication in mitigating the confrontation. Moreover, because the objective of Kennedy and Khrushchev's strategies of persuasion during the crisis was to resolve the conflict, the model just outlined makes it easier to identify that communication which did indeed bring the crisis to a close. Clearly, this significant communication is international political communication because the resolution of the Cuban Crisis did make a difference in the affairs of the United States with the Soviet Union. The main point is that before this or any piece of significant communication can be labeled international political communication the critic must identify and assess the worth of all the international communication during the international exchange. And only that communication which is important in the relationships between two

countries is entitled to the term international political communication. Without the distinction the model provides, the communicologist is faced with a task of using one term--international communication--to explain a fundamentally disjunctive phenomenon--communication which does or does not make a difference in the affairs of one state with another.

Not only does the model divide international and international political communication, but also it divides international cultural from intercultural. Once again this is done for clarity. It sidesteps the question of: "What is a culture?"--which probably will be argued over for as long as people differ from each other--and focuses on cultural differences among nation states. The advantage of this distinction is obvious--simplicity, clarity, and increased understanding.

Finally, the model asserts that international and intercultural communication are different in their fundamental nature. In addition to the differences based on culture and communication across national boundaries, these two types of communication differ philosophically. International communication is concerned with communication as act and interaction--strategies of persuasion, manipulation and control are the heart of this communication construct. This is especially so of international political communication. As Davison observes: "From very early times, political leaders have supplemented diplomacy and force with communications addressed to peoples of other nations. Most of these have been appeals made in wartime to win over or subvert an enemy."[15] Moreover, Davison argues that American experience in using international

communications as an instrument of foreign policy has likewise been largely in situations of conflict.[16] Such incidents of communication in conflict--which comprise most of our international communications--are clearly manipulatory in nature.

Nations not only verbally communicate threats, but also communicate through their various actions. Schelling argues that international communication stands little chance of becoming international political communication--or communication which makes a difference in the affairs of one state with another or changes the behavior of another state--without some kind of overt action: "In fact, there is probably no characteristic of limited war more striking than this, that one communicates by deed rather than words, or by deed in addition to words, and makes the actions form a pattern of communication in spite of the fact that each side is literate enough to understand what the other is saying."[17] In other words, most of the communication among nations that would fall under the umbrella of international relations is by definition manipulative.

Ostensibly many U.S. international communications are not persuasive, but closer examination reveals that they are. For example, in the case of the United States program of "communication for international understanding" the implication is to make the underdeveloped countries "understand" in order to favorably affect and influence their foreign policy toward the U.S. An outstanding example of this not so subtle type of persuasion is the U.S. Information Agency's attempt to communicate "to the peoples of other nations that the objectives and policies of the United States

are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress, and peace; and to explain U. S. foreign policy, to counter hostile propaganda, and to present a balanced, accurate picture of American life and culture."[18] The Agency maintains 161 "information" centers in 65 countries.

This persuasive nature of communication changes alterably when put in an intercultural context. Rich and Ogawa observe that intercultural communication concentrates on communication between peoples of different cultures as opposed to communication between representatives of nations.[19]

This person to person dimension gives intercultural communication a different focus than international communication. Barnlund's "meaning-centered" philosophy of communication seems to embody the spirit of this type of communication: "It admits that meaning in the sender, and the words of the messages are important, but regards as most critical the state of mind, the assumptive world and the needs of the listener or observer."[20] Perhaps the fundamental difference between international communication and intercultural communication is that maybe the latter should be concerned with cooperation, harmony, and shared meaning, not "understanding" for the purpose of manipulation because this type of understanding is transparent. Perhaps intercultural communication is not primarily concerned with strategies of persuasion, message evaluation, feedback, or noise, but with creating meaning out of a situation in order to share a separate identifiable reality apart from nationality or nationalism. That is, because of cultural differences--

different views of the world, beliefs, attitudes, values, ethics, morals, spatial relationships, temporal variables, role relationships--no intercultural communication can be judged by any universal yardstick. Each different communication transaction is distinctly unique--a separate identifiable reality. So to view intercultural communication from an effect model or interactionist model framework is both antithetical to the fundamental nature of the process and self-defeating because manipulation and control, either overt or covert, do not usually regard "as most critical the state of mind, the assumptive world and the needs of the listener or observer."

Finally, it has been the intention of this paper to argue that international and intercultural communication need to be redefined and interrelated in order to clear the air with regard to what scholars mean when they use these terms. The model this paper provides and its pursuant clarification will lead to a greater possibility of the eventuality of a "curricula of study" in the "conflict studies field" that Prosterman calls for in the introduction to this paper. Maletzke agrees with the need for this more "integrative approach" when he says: "It becomes apparent, too, that the traditional academic disciplines are no longer enough to serve in themselves as a framework for study, or for an ordering of the material in the field of intercultural communication."[21] The same holds true international communication.

It is appropriate that this clarification of the interrelationships among international and intercultural communication should come from those interested in communication studies as a principal concern rather than those interested in international relations, conflict resolution, comparative politics, sociology, anthropology. In other words, it is appropriate that communicologists rather than political scientists, sociologists, or anthropologists should be providing a common meeting ground for other disciplines in the study of communication--be it international, intercultural or otherwise.

Footnotes

[1]Gerhard Maletzke, "Intercultural Communication," In International Communication: Media, Channels, and Functions, ed. Heinz-Dietrich Fischer and John C. Merrill. (New York: Hastings House, 1970), pp. 477-478.

[2]Ibid, p. 478.

[3]K.S. Sitaram, "What is Intercultural Communication?" In Intercultural Communication: A Reader, ed. by Larry A. Samover and Richard E. Porter. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1972), p. 20.

[4]Charles A. McClelland, "Communication, Political: International Aspects," Encyclopedia of The Social Sciences, 1968, p. 96.

[5]See Paul W. Keller, "The Study of Face-to-Face International Decision-Making," Journal of Communication, 13 (1963), pp. 67-73.

[6]Michael H. Prosser, Intercommunication Among Nations and Peoples. (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. xi.

[7]Roy L. Posterman, Surviving to 3000: An Introduction to the Study of Lethal Conflict. (Belmont, California: Duxbury Press, 1972), p. xi, xvii.

[8]Nicholas Johnson, "The Crush of Television," In Mass Media: The

Invisible Environment, ed Robert T. Glessing and William P. White (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1973), p. 6.

[9]Richard Fagen, Politics and Communication (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966), p. 70.

[10]W. Phillips Davison, International Political Communication (New York: Praeger, 1965).

[11]Ibid, p. 3

[12]Ibid, p. 10

[13]See Fagen's "What Communication is Most Relevant?" in Politics and Communication. pp. 17-33, for a parallel argument concerning national political communication.

[14]Jerrold J. Merchant, "Kennedy-Khrushchev Strategies of Persuasion During the Cuban Missile Crisis," unpubl. diss. (Univ. of Southern California, 1971).

[15]International Political Communication, p. 157.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Thomas C. Schelling, Arms and Influence (New Haxen: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 146.

[18]Bertrand R. Canfield, "International Public Relations," In International Communication, ed. Fischer and Merrill, p. 384.

[19]Andrea L. Rich and Dennis M. Ogawa, "Intercultural and Interracial Communication: An Analytical Approach," In Samovar and Porter, p. 24.

[20]Dean C. Barnlund, "Toward a Meaning-centered Philosophy of Communication." In Bridges Not Walls, ed. by John Stewart (Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1973), pp. 46-47.

[21]"Intercultural Communication,: In Fischer and Merrill, p. 479.